

## International

# Israel offers to be flexible on 48-hour deadline for peace

Arabs to call for UN trial of Israeli 'criminals'

JERUSALEM, Oct 20 : The 48-hour deadline for peace in the Palestinian territories is flexible, an Israeli government spokesman said today as the clock ticked down on a US-brokered ceasefire accord.

"We started to count from the meeting between security people from both sides (on Wednesday), so it's supposed to be late afternoon or evening. But we are flexible on this," foreign ministry spokesman Noam Katz told AFP.

"It's the longest two days that I know. But we are flexible on that. We don't have to change the rules of the game at the moment," he added.

But he reiterated the Israeli view that the Palestinian Authority did not want peace at this time.

"We think Arafat is not willing and not ready to do what is necessary.

The international community can identify the same things," Katz said.

Israel has put the onus firmly on the Palestinians to stop violent incidents from occurring at Jewish settlements and Israeli army posts in the territories.

Palestinian leaders have repeatedly said they can do nothing to stop the stone-throwing Intifada, or uprising, which has characterised most of the violence of the past three weeks and led to more than 110 deaths.

"If the war is continuing on the ground -- nothing has really changed in the field --, you see deep involvement of Palestinians and Palestinian police in the events," the foreign ministry spokesman said.

"The level of intensity in the last two days is very similar to what happened before," Katz said.

He said the security committee comprising US, Israeli and Palestinian security officials to coordinate compliance with the Sharm el-Sheikh summit accord still offered the best hope of achieving peace.

"We still hope that it will work," Katz said.

Meanwhile, Arab leaders are to study a call for the UN Security Council to put on trial Israeli "criminals" for the killings of around 100 Pales-

tinians in the last three weeks of violence, the PLO said today.

Arab foreign ministers are to make the recommendation for the summit on Saturday and Sunday in the Egyptian capital, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's political department chief, Faruq Gaddumi, told reporters.

The ministers who met here Thursday called for the formation of "tribunals to judge those who have committed crimes against the Palestinian people, and for the Security Council to implement this process," he said.

Gaddumi said the proposal would be part of a package of "political, economic and material support" measures to be submitted to Arab leaders at their emergency summit convened to debate the Israeli-Palestinian clashes.

Some Israeli states will threaten a break in ties "if the aggressions continue," he said, without naming them.

Several Arab diplomats, who asked not to be named, told AFP the summit will also demand the creation of an international commission of inquiry into the clashes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Libyan leader Moammer Gaddafi on Wednesday revealed the contents of the draft resolution for the summit, the first gathering of Arab heads of state since 1996.

It proposes "denouncing" and "condemning" the Jewish state for the violence in the Palestinian territories, but Gaddafi charged that the draft was too soft on Israel in terms of concrete measures.

One good point in the draft, Gaddafi said, was a proposal to seek international legal action against "certain Israeli leaders," notably Ariel Sharon, the hawkish leader of Israel's right-wing Likud opposition.

It was a highly publicised September 28 visit by Sharon to a disputed holy site in Arab east Jerusalem sacred to both Jews and Muslims that sparked the clashes.

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On September 15, a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber detonated explosives strapped to his body as he was about to be body searched by police outside the main eye hospital here. A policeman and six bystanders were killed.

Colombo's police deputy inspector-general, Bodhi Liyanage, said they had information that at least 23 suicide bombers and another 15 of their supporters had entered the capital for more attacks.

The town hall could not have been target of the attack, a senior police officer here said. "Obviously something went wrong for them and we were lucky to have averted a bigger tragedy."

A police spokesman noted that Thursday's bombing was the fourth suicide bombing that had

apparently failed for Tamil Tigers in the capital this year.

Several roads in the capital have been closed for fear of drive-by bombings by the Tamil Tigers who consider the suicide bombers, or Black Tigers, their "protective armour."

Meanwhile, Government forces repulsed a fresh onslaught by Tamil Tiger guerrillas in Sri Lanka's northern Jaffna peninsula amid heavy casualties on both sides, military officials here said today.

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